SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY: Sir, May I know from the hon. Minister whether in the proposed amendment, the Government will also consider the proposals submitted by the State Government and to strengthen the Consumer Forms Can the financial help also to be provided in the proposed amendment?

SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED: Sir, that is one problem which the State Government have been continuously representing to the Central Government. They are complaining of the financial constraints. They have also approached the Planning Commission to see that the recurring expenditure is treated as plan expenditure. But, Planning Commission has not agreed to. They have their own difficulties and we are trying to find ways to solve this problem.

[*Translation*]

Minimum Needs Programme

*495. SHRI KASHIRAM RANA: Will the Minister of PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Central assistance being provided to Gujarat for the Minimum Needs Programme has been curtailed;

(b) if so, the amount curtailed during the last three years;

(c) the names of programmes for which the said amount of assistance has been curtailed; and

(d) the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI H. R. BHARDWAJ): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (d). Do not arise.

MR. SPEAKER: The scoop of this question is confined to matter relating to the State of Gujarat only.

AN HON. MEMBER: Therefore, Members from Gujarat should be given the chance to speak.

SHRI KASHIRAM RANA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, in his reply, the hon. Minister has stated that the central assistance being provided to Gujarat for the Minimum Needs Programme has not been curtailed, but I would like to say that the Central is doing injustice to Gujarat in many other matters, whether it be allocation o gas, coal supply of foodgrain quota filed for the State. I am mentioning this here because on the basis of the quota allocated earlier, minimum 10 kilograms and Meximum 40 kilograms of wheat used to be provided, but since last moth it has bee reduced to half with minimum 5 kilos and maximum 20 kilograms. Similary a minimum of 5 kilograms and a maximum of 20 kgs of rice used to be given, but now it has come down to minimum of two kilos and a maximum of 5 kilos. Now, if the Central assistance being provided to Gujarat for the Minimum Needs Programme has not been curtailed, then I would like to know from the hon. Minister the amount of assistance provided by the Union Government in the last two year?

[*English*]

MR. SPEAKER: Cac you give last year's and this years's figures?

SHRI H. R. BHARDWAJ: Sir, this gas and other things are not covered, but on the minimum needs programme the Centre has not generally made any cuts in any State, but the States do have their own problems and those problems will be discussed in the Eighth Plan. My information is that up to seventh Plan there was no cut.

MR. SPEAKER: Can you give the figures or the supply made to them?

SHRI H. R. BHAR DWAJ: Definitely, Sir, whatever the hon. Members wants.

SHRI KASHIRAM RANA: I want to know the figures because I have asked the question regarding the fugures.

SHRI SPEAKER: Do you have the figures now?

SHRI H. R. BHAR DWAJ: Sir, I can give all the figures to him in writing.

SHRI KASHIRAM RANA: I would like to know from the hon. Minister, through you, whether the Government is thinking of revising the norms of minimum needs programme due to heavy prise rise in essential commodities and the rushing in the number of persons who live below the poverty line.

SHRI H. R. BHAR DWAJ: Sir, there is a strategy in the Eighth Plan. A small working group was constituted to see how effective the implementation of these programmes are. So, they have suggested, as a matter of fact, reducing the 12 programmes to 5 programmes and concentrate on them and those important areas are elementary education, rural health, rural water supply rural roads and rural electrification. They have now been focussed at and the funds will be diverted mainly to them. Because of the resource constraints, other programmes are not getting that attention and there is a difficulty in funding those programmes.

[Tra*nslation*]

SHRI HARIN PATHAK: Mr. Speaker, Sir, through you, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the Chief Minister of Gujarat has urged the centre to increase the central assistance being provided to the State under the Minimum Needs Programme?

SHRI H. R. BHARDWAJ: Sir, at present, I don't have any information pertaining to the correspondence of the hon. Chief Minister. If you ..... (*Interruptions*).....

SHRI HARIN PATHAK: Mr. Speaker, it is such an important question and the hon. Minister is expressing his ignorance about it. The Chief Minister had written a letter... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI H. R. BHARDWAJ: I am not even aware whether he has written any letter or not ... (*Interruptions*)... I do not know. (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: If you ask too many question in one go, then chances are that the hon. Minister may not get your point Therefore, please ask question one after another.

(Interruptions)

[*English*]

SHRI HARIN PATHAK: Sir, I have asked a pointed question, whether the Gujarat Government has made any demand for increase in the quota. (*Interruptions*)

[*Translation*]

SHRI H. R. BHARDWAJ: Mr. Speaker, Sir, as I submitted earlier also, we have not curtailed central assistance. If the Gujarat Chief Minister has written any letter in this regard, please give me the details, I shall certainly give a reply. (Interruptions)

SHRI RATILAL VARMA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has just now stated that Central assistance for drinking water supply in Gujarat has not been curtailed. If this is true then through you, I would like to know from the hon. Minister the reasons for the

gradual shortage of potable water in the State's rural areas which is having an adverse impact on the health of the village folk and which has already claimed many precious lives (*Interruptions*)

SHRI H. R. BHARDWAJ: You can verify from the Chief Minister, the facts which I have submitted.

[*English*]

Urban Settlement Policy

*497. SHRI R. DHANUSKODI ATHITHAN: Will the Minister of URBAN DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the urban population in the country has been increasing rapidly;

(b) whether the Government have any urban settlement policy; and

(c) if some the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI SHEILA KAUL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c). Urban Development is primarily the responsibility of the State Government/U.T. Administration. The Central Govt. plays only a catalytic/nodal role. The policy content in the programmes undertaken has efforts at reduction of migration of population from rural areas to major urban areas, through removal of poverty and jobs for urban poor through Nehru Rozgar Yojana, and improvement in the living conditions in slum areas.

SHRI R. DHANUSKODI ATHITHAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister's reply is very evasive. My question was about the policy on urban settlement, but she did not mention anything about that. When I visited metropolitan cities I found the downtrodden people sleeping in the streets during night. So, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the Government have any specific programme to give shelter for the people who are living below the poverty line. Likewise, in cities like Delhi, Bombay, Madras etc., the Central Government employees have not been provided adequate accommodation. Hence, I would also like to know whether the Government have any plan to give accommodation for them at the earliest.

SHRIMATI SHEILA KAUL: Sir, I would like to inform the hon. Members that the urban population of our country is increasing and it has gone up by 5.77 crores and at present it is 21.72 crores. The Urban Development Ministry is in the process of formulating a National Urban Policy and it may be called Settlement Policy also. Then, recognition the serious situation of urbanisation process, the Government has constituted a National Commission on Urbanisation and it has recommended adequate investment in the growth centres so that they become sources of employment for neighbouring areas. We have already formulated various schemes and they are under examination.

SHRI R. DHANUSKODI ATHITHAN: Sir, I would like to know whether the Government have any plan to construct parallett cities near the metropolitan cities with all amenities to check the growth of population.

SHRIMATI SHEILA KAUL: We have a scheme for the integrated development of small and medium towns and the scheme of IDSFT was introduced during Sixth Five Year Plan which s to reduce migration from rural areas to urban areas, to generate more employment and to provide sufficient infrastructure facilities to these towns and their hinterlands to serve them better.

SHRI SUNIL DATT (Bombay North West): In Bombay we have more than 40 per cent people living in slums. The hon. Minister said that there is improvement in the living conditions in some areas. But we have slums on aviation land, we have slums on railway property and we have slums on Defence land. No amenities are provided over there. I would like to ask the hon. Minister if they have done anything to give proper amenities to the slum dwellers of those areas.

SHRIMATI SHEILA KAUL: This is a question about the facilites to the slum areas. You would perhaps recall that Rs. 100 crores was given for improvement of Taravi area and if you go to that area, you will see that things have improved. Yet, there are certain areas, as you mentioned railways areas, which need improvement. It is under Railway Ministry and we would like to see that also improves.